

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An [[A]]apparatus for serving a plurality of devices through a communications network, the apparatus comprising:
 - a memory for storing a plurality of records associated with the devices, respectively;
 - an input element for receiving from a selected device a request that is generated upon initial power up of the selected device for configuration of the selected device from a generic configuration to a selected or custom configuration through the communications network, the request including coded information, wherein the selected device is physically possessed by a customer;
 - a processor responsive to the request for locating a record associated with the selected device, and verifying an identity of the selected device based on the coded information, the record including second information concerning the selected or custom configuration for the selected device, the selected or custom configuration corresponding to a predetermined feature set of the selected device; and
 - an output element for providing through the communications network to the selected device information objects for modifying the generic configuration to the selected or custom configuration based on the second information when the identity of the selected device is verified.
2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the coded information including encrypted information concerning the identity of the selected device.
3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the encrypted information concerns a serial number of the selected device.
4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the encrypted information is encrypted in accordance with a public key algorithm.
5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the coded information including a digital signature resulting from cryptographically signing at least part of the request.
6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information objects include software components.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information objects include data.
8. (Currently Amended) An [[A]]apparatus physically possessed by a customer configurable by a server through a communications network, the apparatus comprising:
 - a processor for generating a request that is generated upon initial power up of the apparatus for configuration of the apparatus from a generic configuration to a selected or custom configuration which includes therein coded information for verification by the server of an identity of the apparatus, the coded information being generated using [[the]] a cryptographic element;
 - an interface for receiving information objects corresponding to a predetermined feature set of the apparatus for configuring the apparatus from the server through the communications network when the identity of the apparatus is verified by the server, the information objects modifying the generic configuration of the apparatus;
 - a memory; and
9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the cryptographic element includes a private key.
10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the request is automatically generated on an initial power up of the apparatus.
11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the coded information including a digital signature resulting from cryptographically signing at least part of the request.
12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 comprising a franking system.
13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the information objects include software components.
14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the information objects include data.

15. (Currently Amended) An [[A]]apparatus for serving a plurality of devices through a communications network, the apparatus comprising:

 a memory for storing a plurality of records associated with the devices, respectively;

 an input element for receiving from a selected device a request that is generated upon initial power up of the selected device, for configuration of the selected device from a generic configuration to a selected or custom configuration through the communications network, the request including a cryptographic element, and first information concerning a first identifier identifying the selected device, the first information being encrypted, wherein the selected device is physically possessed by a customer;

 a processor for selecting a record based on the cryptographic element, the selected record including a second identifier and configuration information concerning the selected or custom configuration for the selected device, the selected or custom configuration corresponding to a predetermined feature set of the selected device, the processor determining whether the second identifier corresponds to the first identifier obtained by decrypting the first information using the cryptographic element; and

 an output element for causing the generic configuration of the selected device to be configured based on the configuration information when it is determined that the second identifier corresponds to the first identifier.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the cryptographic element includes a public key.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the first identifier includes a serial number of the selected device.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the first information is encrypted in accordance with a public key algorithm.

19. (Currently Amended) A method for use in an apparatus for serving a plurality of devices through a communications network, the method comprising:

 storing a plurality of records associated with the devices, respectively;

 receiving from a selected device a request that is generated upon initial power up of the selected device for configuration of the selected device from a generic configuration to a selected or

custom configuration through the communications network, the request including coded information, wherein the selected device is physically possessed by a customer;

in response to the request, locating a record associated with the selected device;

verifying an identity of the selected device based on the coded information, the record including second information concerning a selected configuration; and

providing through the communications network to the selected device information objects for modifying generic configuration to the selected or custom configuration based on the second information when the identity of the selected device is verified, the information objects corresponding to a predetermined feature set of the selected device.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the coded information including encrypted information concerning the identity of the selected device.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein the encrypted information concerns a serial number of the selected device.

22. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein the encrypted information is encrypted in accordance with a public key algorithm.

23. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the coded information including a digital signature resulting from cryptographically signing at least part of the request.

24. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the information objects include software components.

25. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the information objects include data.

26. (Currently Amended) A method for use in an apparatus physically possessed by a customer configurable by a server through a communications network, the apparatus including a memory, the method comprising:

generating a request upon an initial power up of the apparatus for configuration of the apparatus from a generic configuration to a selected or custom configuration which includes therein

coded information for verification by the server of an identity of the apparatus, the coded information being generated using the cryptographic element;

receiving information objects corresponding to a predetermined feature set of the apparatus for modifying the generic configuration of the apparatus to the selected or custom configuration from the server through the communications network when the identity of the apparatus is verified by the server; and

loading the information objects in the memory in accordance with a predetermined plan.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the cryptographic element includes a private key.

28. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the request is automatically generated on an initial power up of the apparatus.

29. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the coded information including a digital signature resulting from cryptographically signing at least part of the request.

30. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the information objects include software components.

31. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the information objects include data.

32. (Currently Amended) A method for use in an apparatus for serving a plurality of devices through a communications network, the method comprising:

storing a plurality of records associated with the devices, respectively;

receiving from a selected device a request that is generated upon initial power up of the selected device for configuration of the selected device from a generic configuration to a selected or custom configuration through the communications network, the request including a cryptographic element, and first information concerning a first identifier identifying the selected device, the first information being encrypted, wherein the selected device is physically possessed by a customer;

selecting a record based on the cryptographic element, the selected record including a second identifier and configuration information corresponding to the selected configuration for the selected

device, the selected or custom configuration corresponding to a predetermined feature set of the selected device;

 determining whether the second identifier corresponds to the first identifier obtained by decrypting the first information using the cryptographic element; and

 causing the generic configuration of the selected device to be modified from the generic configuration to the selected or custom configuration based on the configuration information when it is determined that the second identifier corresponds to the first identifier.

33. (Original) The method of claim 32 wherein the cryptographic element includes a public key.

34. (Original) The method of claim 32 wherein the first identifier includes a serial number of the selected device.

35. (Original) The method of claim 32 wherein the first information is encrypted in accordance with a public key algorithm.